

Application No. 10/049,417
Response dated: February 14, 2006
In Reply to Restriction Requirement dated: December 15, 2005

REMARKS

In an Office Action dated December 12, 2005, the Examiner holds that the application contains more than one invention which are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1. Applicants are required to elect a single invention to which the claims shall be restricted.

Claims 1-30 are currently pending. Claim 17 is amended to correct an inadvertent typographical error.

Particularly, the Examiner identifies :

Group I as including Claims 1-16 and 23-30 drawn to a representation and/or format of an audio signal;

Group II as including Claim 17 drawn to a decoding process of an audio signal; and

Group III as including Claims 18-22 drawn to a rendering system not specific to any type of input signal, specifically not an audio signal.

No generic claim is identified by the Examiner.

The Examiner contends that these enumerated groups do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, the groups lack the same or corresponding special technical feature because Group I is drawn to a representation of format of an audio signal including a multimedia data carrier, which the medium in which the audio is transmitted and/or received; Group II is drawn to a method of decoding; and Group III is drawn to a rendering system for any type of input signal.

In reply to the restriction requirement, Applicants herein elect Group I, as including Claims 1-16 and 23-30, with traverse. Notwithstanding the present election, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the cancelled claims in a related application(s) without prejudice with respect to the present amendment or otherwise.

Applicant respectfully suggests that Groups I, II and III are accepted statutory matter under PCT Rule 13.1 and 13.2. Further, no additional burden is incurred by

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Examiner to examine Groups II and III as they recite substantially similar limitations to those found in Group I.

PCT Rule 13.1 defines a requirement of unity of invention such that one invention or a group of inventions is so linked as to form a single general inventive concept. PCT Rule 13.2 recites that for a finding of lack of unity to be proper, there must be a lack of a technical relationship among the claimed inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding special technical features.

Claim 1 (Group I) recites "[a]udio signal format comprising N components, each of said N components representing a *direction*, said N components being uncorrelated." Claim 17 recites, *inter alia*, "[a]method of decoding M *directional components* into N *directional components*, said method comprising transforming M input directional components to N output directional components wherein said M and N directional components form an audio signal in accordance with an audio signal format comprising M and N components, each of said M and N components representing a *direction*, said M and N components being uncorrelated." The subject matter of Claim 1 is included in Claim 17.

That is, the subject matter of Group II clearly relates to the subject matter of elected Group I as a method of transforming between different embodiments of the audio signal format claimed in Group I (e.g. Claim 1), thereby indicating a clearly technical relationship involving the same or corresponding special technical feature, namely, the representation and/or format of the audio signal.

Accordingly, restriction of the claims of the Office communication is improper. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

The foregoing is believed to be fully responsive to the outstanding Office Action.

No new matter is added by way of the present Amendment and Remarks as support is found throughout the originally filed specification, claims and drawings.

The Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's attorney at the below-listed phone number regarding this Response or otherwise concerning the present application.

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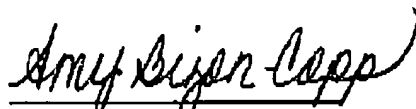
Applicant hereby petitions for any necessary extension of time required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.136(a) or 1.136(b) which may be required for entry and consideration of the present Reply.

If there are any charges due with respect to this Amendment or otherwise, please charge them to Deposit Account No. 06-1130 maintained by Applicant's attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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